

29. RANGE EXTENSION OF THE STRIPED GRASS SKINK *MABUYA DISSIMILIS* (HALLOWELL, 1857)

On 28 August 1991 at 1500 hrs a skink was observed foraging in dry leaf litter under bushes at Popero village of Limkheda taluka, Panchmahal district, Gujarat. It was yellow with prominent stripes on the body. We caught it after some 30 minutes of hard and careful search. On examination it was confirmed to be a striped grass skink *Mabuya dissimilis*.

Description: Total body length 20.3 cm; snout to vent length 7.5 cm; tail length 12.8 cm; shining yellow body colour with four less distinct dark brown parallel stripes, two on the dorsolateral side and two dark black coloured discontinuous stripes on the mid-dorsal region. Eyelid with transparent disk. 38 rows of scales on the body with tricarinate scales. Seven supra labials, the fifth being longer than the others,

16 lamella on the fourth toe.

According to Smith (FAUNA OF BRIT. INDIA, 1935) *M. dissimilis* is distributed in Rajasthan, Punjab, Bihar, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh only. Other than that, distributional records of this skink are not available from the literature. The range of *M. dissimilis* is now extended to Pipero village of Panchmahal district, Gujarat. The collection site is very near to Madhya Pradesh; and near their border, both states have similar habitat. It is also presumed that this species occurs in the desert of Kutch on the Gujarat-Rajasthan border where ecological conditions are similar.

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30. REVIEW OF DISTRIBUTION OF CONDANAROUS SANDSNAKE *PSAMMOPHIS CONDANARUS* (MERREM)

Recent publications on Indian snakes (Daniel 1983, Murthy 1986, Whitaker 1978) do not list the condanarous sandsnake *Psammophis condanarus* (Merrem) (Fam. Colubridae) as being reported from Karnataka erstwhile Mysore state). This is erroneous.

Whitaker (1978) mentions the distribution of *P. condanarus* as "western Himalayas and north-central India" while T.S.N. Murthy (1986) records its distribution as "occurs in Gujarat, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa". Daniel (1983) notes it as occurring in "peninsular India up to Bengal in the east and Andhra Pradesh in the south."

Salim Ali, during his survey of birds in Mysore state (present Karnataka), had retrieved a nine inch long *P. condanarus* specimen along with some loose snake scales from the stomach of a female short-toed eagle *Circaetus gallicus* (Gmelin) on 23 November

1939 at Gopala Swamy Betta (11° 35' N; 76° 43' E, 1451 m above msl) in Bandipur National Park, Karnataka (Ali 1943). Further, Ali mentions "strangely enough this is the first record of this snake from Mysore State" (Ali 1943, Ali and Ripley 1987).

Ali and Ripley (1987) record that the short-toed eagle's habitat preference is open cultivated plains, stony deciduous scrub, foothills and semi-desert, which is the same as the habitat preferred by *P. condanarus*.

Interestingly *P. condanarus* was not seen during the herpetofaunal Survey of Bandipur National park by Malhotra and Sahi (1982). Salim Ali's record happens to be the southernmost record for the species and also the only report from Karnataka. Hence, we may redefine the distribution of *P. condanarus* to include Karnataka.

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